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February 14, 2023

Senate Committee on Natural Resources
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court St. NE Salem Oregon 97301

Re: SB 530 - Support

Dear Chair Golden, Vice-Chair Girod, and Members of the Senate Committee on Natural Resources:

Verde is a community-based organization whose mission is to build environmental wealth through organizing, advocacy, and social enterprise. Environmental wealth means healthy landscapes, healthy communities, and thriving natural resources economies that help sequester carbon and build financial wealth.

SB 530 helps to support the natural climate solutions that are needed to help mitigate the pace of climate change as well as its impacts. Advancing natural climate solutions is key to achieving net zero emissions by 2050, the measure the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has concluded is necessary to avoid the worst impacts of climate change. Natural climate solutions not only have positive impacts on a macro-scale, but provide direct benefits for farmers, ranchers, forest owners, and entire communities across the state. The same practices that sequester and store carbon also make our lands and waters more resilient to climate-fueled drought, wildfires, and extreme temperatures, and help families put food on the table.

Healthy soils produce healthier crops, retain more moisture, and improve water quality, while increasing producers' net earnings over time. Healthy forests provide clean drinking water, habitat for fish and wildlife, and protection from wildfire. Healthy coastal wetlands sequester carbon as they filter water, provide critical habitat, and protect communities from storm surges. All of these benefits are environmental wealth, but to date, Oregon has not invested sufficiently in these solutions, nor supported the Tribal governments, landowners, producers, and communities who have been doing this hard work for years.

SB 530 will fund and direct state agencies to provide incentives and technical support to forest owners, farmers, and ranchers to implement natural climate solutions on natural and working lands. It will also invest in a comprehensive Oregon natural and working lands inventory and study opportunities for workforce development and training. In doing so, SB 530 will position the state to harness billions of dollars in recently-passed federal funding

and private investments in natural climate solutions, by creating a source of state funding that can be used as federal match, and help federal funding not only reach Oregon but go farther.

Oregon's rural and remote communities contribute substantially to climate mitigation, but are often not recognized or resourced for the benefits they provide. These are also the same communities who experience the worst effects of climate-related events such as wildfires and drought. Too often, natural-resource-dependent rural communities are not valued in policymaking or budgeting work. SB 530 is an opportunity to do just that. It is not a mandate, but it does substantially incentivize the work that is needed to make Oregon more climate resilient, help families maintain their land and pass it on to their children, and create economic development opportunities in communities that have been hard hit for many years. SB 530 is not just smart climate policy, but also an important tool to support rural and remote communities for years to come.

Respectfully,

Oriana Magnera
Energy, Climate, and Transportation Manager, Verde